

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS!

PARSHAS YISRO

The Jewish People stood at the foot of Har Sinai, ready to receive the Torah directly from Hashem. The **Talmud** (Shabbos 88A) says, "that the Jewish people actually stood beneath the mountain. Hashem overturned the mountain above them and said, "If you accept the Torah, excellent, and if not, you will be buried there." Rav Acha bar Yaakov said that the Jewish people could claim that they were coerced into accepting the Torah, and it is therefore not binding. Rava disagreed. He said that the Jewish People had reaccepted the Torah willingly in the time of Achashverosh.

There are some interesting points about this. The **Chofetz Chaim** zt"l (Chofetz Chaim on the Torah, Shmos 19:17) says that the World exists only because of Torah. Had the Jews refused to accept the Torah, the world would have been destroyed. Every living being would have died and would be buried in the destroyed world. That is what the pasuk means, "you will be buried there". It should have said, "you will be buried here (under the mountain)". It is telling us that whoever is there or anywhere, will perish.

The **Talmud** gives the impression that the Jewish People were forced to accept the Torah. **Tosefos** asks, didn't the Jewish People show their willingness to accept the Torah when they said, "*na'ase v'nishma*", "we will do and we will hear"? If so, why was there a need to force them to accept the Torah? **Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky** zt"l explains **Tosefos** answer (Emes L'Yaakov Shmos 19:3) based on the Mishna in **Pirkei Avos** (1:3). **Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky** zt"l says that although we should serve Hashem out of love, we must also

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(Shmos 19:2)*

incorporate fear of Heaven into our service. We should view Hashem with awe. Both love and fear are needed to serve Hashem. Sometimes one won't suffice. Thus, even though the Jews had already accepted the Torah from love, they had not yet been tested to

determine if they would also accept it out of fear. That's why, when the Torah was given, Hashem spoke in a very loud voice and a big fire was burning on top of Har Sinai. Hashem wanted to put fear of punishment in our hearts. The mountain was placed over our heads so that we should also accept the Torah with fear of Hashem and fear of sin.

What did the Jews accomplish when they reaccepted the Torah in the time of Achashverosh? **Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz** zt"l says a beautiful explanation which is so relevant to current events. (Sichas Mussar Ma'amar 37). The Torah (Shmos 19:2) says, "They had journeyed from Rephidim and had come to the desert of Sinai and camped in the desert. Yisrael camped

there opposite the mountain.” The Torah changes from plural, “They had journeyed” to singular, “*vayichan*”, “Yisrael camped”. **Rashi** explains, “as one man and with one heart”. With unity. “All their other encampments were made in a murmuring spirit and in a spirit of dissension.” Hashem said, since the Jewish People are united, at peace, and without dissension, then it is time to give them the Torah (see the end of **Derech Eretz Zuta**). The Torah was not given to individuals but to Klal Yisroel as one. Although there was such a unity and oneness of Klal Yisroel, there was an even greater level of oneness when they reaccepted the Torah in the days of Achashverosh. The Jews were functioning under Haman’s edict “to destroy, massacre, and exterminate all the Jews” (Megillas Esther 3:13). At this time of all-encompassing danger, the Jews were on an exceptionally high level of unity. No one felt even the slightest ill feeling in his heart about his friend. There was not a shred of hatred or jealousy. There was simply love of each Jew for one another.

When the Jews first accepted the Torah on Har Sinai, even though they were “like one man with

one heart”, there was still a higher, holier level that was possible to be attained. In the time of Achashverosh, that holier level was attained. The Jews reaccepted the Torah at that time. Then, the Jews were on an even greater level of unity, because of the danger to their lives. Since all their lives were in danger, any petty grievances or annoyances one Jew may have had towards his friend were no longer important as they had initially seemed. The imminent fear of death wiped clean any negative feelings that one Jew may have felt towards another. The fear of death brought the Jewish People together. The only important thing in their hearts was to daven to Hashem to save their lives!

October 7th is a day that Jews will not forget. Before that date, sadly there was strife among Jews in Eretz Yisroel. Afterwards, for a long period of time, there was a great feeling of unity. Irreligious Jews and religious Jews viewed each other as family. A feeling of warmth and togetherness was fostered. The realization dawned on many, that Jews care about Jews even though many people of the world do not. There were a number of miraculous successes against our enemies during this period of unity.

May Klal Yisroel understand the importance of being unified and staying unified.

There is a power inherent in our unity.

May we feel this way without needing a calamity to bring us together!

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